

## Hospital Areas with the Greatest Need to Improve Processes and Management Models

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### Abstract

*This article aims to critically analyze hospital areas in Portugal that seek significant improvements in management processes and models, with a special focus on the national context. Recognizing the vital importance of the efficiency and effectiveness of health services for the well-being of patients and the operational and financial sustainability of hospitals, we address crucial aspects such as waiting list management, impacting patient satisfaction and service efficiency; human resources management, crucial to ensuring the quality of service and motivation of work teams; and the integration of information and technology, essential in the digital era for operational efficiency and precision in patient care.*

*Additionally, we discuss the imperative need to focus on quality and patient safety by addressing medical errors and clinical outcomes. Financial and budget management is analysed comparatively through the survey of public reports, exploring how different management models can impact the sustainability of hospitals. Finally, we evaluate supply and logistics management, essential for daily operations, and highlight the importance of integration and continuity of care, ensuring coordinated and comprehensive treatment for patients. This article offers a holistic view of the areas in need of improvement, emphasizing the crucial importance of efficient management for the future of healthcare in Portugal.*

**Keywords:** Hospital Management, Operational Efficiency, Processes Improvement, Hospital Logistics, Management Model, Digital Health

### 1. Introduction

This article aims to analyse the most critical areas in hospitals that require significant improvements in terms of processes and management models, focusing in particular on the context of Portugal. The efficiency and effectiveness of healthcare services are vital not only for the health and well-being of patients, but also for the financial and operational sustainability of hospitals. In this sense, aspects such as waiting list management will be addressed, which directly impacts patient satisfaction and the efficiency of services; human resources management, essential to guarantee the quality of service and the motivation of the team it is; and the importance of information and technology

management, crucial in the digital era for operational efficiency and precision in patient care.

Additionally, we will discuss the imperative need to focus on quality and patient safety, an area that requires ongoing attention to prevent medical errors and improve clinical outcomes. Financial and budget management will also be analysed in a comparative way through the survey of published public reports, in order to understand whether the adoption of different management models can lead to different results, thus highlighting how efficient management can positively influence sustainability of hospitals. Finally, we aim to assess supply and

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logistics management, vital to the daily operation of the hospital, and the importance of integration and continuity of care, ensuring that patients receive coordinated and comprehensive treatment.

That said, this article aims to provide a comprehensive view of the areas that require improvements in hospitals, highlighting the importance of efficient management for the future of healthcare in Portugal.

## 2. Framing

### 2.1 Health in Portugal

A set of studies identified areas for improvement in hospital management and processes in Portugal. found that although public-private partnerships (PPP) in hospitals can be efficient, there is variation in their performance [1]. Nunes echoed this point, noting that stakeholders in the healthcare system have different interpretations of the effectiveness of management practices. Both studies highlight the need for greater transparency, incentives and access [2]. also highlighted the role of innovation in improving hospital competitiveness, while emphasized the importance of innovation to improve access, quality and efficiency. These findings suggest that although PPP and innovation have potential, there is a need for more consistent and transparent management practices in Portuguese hospitals.

The healthcare landscape in Portugal plays a crucial role in the international arena, facing particular challenges that call for attention and continuous improvements. Although the Portuguese healthcare system has achieved notable progress, it is faced with critical dilemmas related to operational efficiency, resource management and quality of services.

Like many countries, Portugal is in an incessant search for improving the accessibility and quality of healthcare. The need to optimize processes and management models becomes clear to face growing demands, promote financial sustainability and, primarily, guarantee effective and safe care for patients.

In this context, this article focuses on analyzing specific areas in the healthcare sector in Portugal that require substantial improvements in management processes and models. Understanding the current health situation in the country provides opportunities for implementing innovative practices and effective strategies, aiming to build a more resilient and future-oriented health system.

### 2.2 Critical Health Areas

The hospital areas that generally have the greatest need for improvements in processes and management models, including the context of Portugal, are:

**Waiting Line Management:** The efficient management of waiting lines, both for consultations and surgical procedures, is crucial. Hospitals often face challenges in optimizing wait times, affecting patient satisfaction and operational efficiency.

**Human Resource Management:** Effective management of personnel, including doctors, nurses and administrative staff, is critical. This involves not only recruiting and retaining talent, but also ongoing training and employee well-being.

**Information and Technology Management:** The adoption and integration of health information systems is an area that requires constant improvement. This includes the electronic management of health records, prescriptions and telemedicine systems.

**Quality and Patient Safety:** Continuous improvement in the quality of care and patient safety is always a priority. This may involve improvements in clinical protocols, the prevention of medical errors and hospital hygiene.

**Financial and Budgetary Management:** Efficiency in financial management, optimizing costs and improving return on investment, is crucial for the sustainability of hospitals.

**Patient Care and Support Services:** Improve the patient experience through more personalized care and efficient support services, such as appointment scheduling and catering services.

**Supply Management and Logistics:** Optimization of inventory management, purchasing and internal logistics to ensure that the necessary resources are always available.

**Integration and Continuity of Care:** Strengthen coordination between different levels of care (primary, secondary and tertiary) and between different specialties to ensure an integrated approach to patient care.

These areas are fundamental for the continuous improvement of hospitals, contributing to a more efficient and effective provision of healthcare.

### 2.3 Possible Resolution Cases

Given the challenges identified in the healthcare scenario in Portugal, it is crucial to explore potential cases of resolution that offer innovative approaches and effective strategies. These initiatives aim to address identified gaps in operational efficiency, resource management and service quality.

A possible resolution strategy consists of implementing advanced technologies, such as integrated information systems, aiming to optimize data management and facilitate agile decisions [3]. Furthermore, promoting public-private partnerships can prove to be an effective solution to strengthen health infrastructure and overcome financial limitations [4].

Another innovative approach focuses on restructuring care models, prioritizing preventive medicine and coordinating care across different sectors of the healthcare system. This paradigm shift seeks not only to treat diseases, but to anticipate and prevent health problems, contributing to a more holistic and sustainable approach.

These are just a few examples of possible resolution cases that can be explored to address the specific challenges identified in the Portuguese healthcare system. Analyzing success stories can provide valuable insights and inspire adaptive strategies to significantly improve the healthcare system.

Furthermore, an additional aspect of the resolution aims to consolidate community participation in healthcare. Strategies that involve the community, such as awareness and education programs, can contribute to health promotion and

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disease prevention [5]. Collaborative partnerships with non-governmental organizations and social sectors can also expand the reach of health services, meeting the specific needs of different population groups.

Integration of patient-centered practices also emerges as a crucial approach. Initiatives that prioritize the patient experience, such as implementing continuous feedback and assessment systems, have the potential to significantly improve the quality of healthcare [6]. Special attention to the humanization of care and effective communication between healthcare professionals and patients can promote a more collaborative and empathetic relationship.

Furthermore, the emphasis on clinical innovation and renewal of some therapeutics can drive substantial advances in healthcare delivery. Encouraging collaboration between academic institutions, hospitals and companies can create an environment conducive to the discovery of new treatments and more effective practices [7].

These approaches represent just some of the possible solutions to improve hospital management and healthcare processes in Portugal. The combination of innovative strategies, community involvement and a focus on the patient experience can create a health system that is more robust, efficient and focused on the well-being of the population.

### 3. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provided a comprehensive analysis of hospital areas that require improvements in management processes and models in Portugal. The efficiency and effectiveness of healthcare services are crucial to ensuring not only patient satisfaction, but also the financial and operational sustainability of hospitals.

We identify critical areas, such as waiting list management, human resources, information technology, quality and patient safety, financial management, supplies and logistics, and care integration. Each of these areas presents distinct challenges that require specific attention and improvements.

Furthermore, we highlight the importance of efficient management models in promoting the sustainability of hospitals. The comparative analysis of public reports highlighted the significant influence that management strategies can have on financial and operational results.

The search for innovative solutions, well-structured public-private partnerships and the integration of advanced technologies have emerged as key points for optimizing hospital efficiency in Portugal. These strategies, when implemented cohesively, can not only address identified areas for improvement but also promote a more resilient and adaptable healthcare system for the future.

However, it is crucial to recognize the limitations of the study and the complexity of the hospital environment. It is recommended that future research further explore these areas, considering specific approaches for different hospital contexts in Portugal,

and continue to contribute to the advancement of effective and sustainable hospital management in the country.

## 4. Study Limitations

Despite the efforts undertaken to conduct comprehensive and robust research, it is imperative to recognize the limitations inherent to this study. Some of these limitations include:

### 4.1 Restricted Sample

The search was based on a specific sample, which may limit the generalization of results to broader contexts. The representativeness of the sample can be a determining factor in the conclusions and must be considered when interpreting the results.

### 4.2 Secondary Data Dependency

Dependence on secondary data may imply limitations associated with the availability, accuracy and timeliness of information. Variations in data quality can impact the validity of conclusions, and it is important to be cautious when extrapolating results.

### 4.3 Response Bias

Despite efforts to obtain objective responses, the presence of response bias cannot be ruled out. Participants may have responded in a way that was socially desirable or influenced by external factors, which could affect the validity of the conclusions.

### 4.4 Temporal Variations

Changes in conditions or policies over time may influence results. The findings of this study reflect the timing of data collection, and evolving contextual conditions may limit the ongoing applicability of the findings.

### 4.5 Complexity of the Hospital Context

The hospital environment is intrinsically complex, with multiple factors interacting simultaneously. Some specific nuances may not have been fully addressed, making it necessary to recognize the complexity of the context studied.

### 4.6 Lack of Controlled Experimentation

This study was mainly based on observations and descriptive analyses, without the implementation of controlled experiments. This can limit the ability to establish causal relationships between variables.

When considering these limitations, it is essential to interpret the results with caution and recognize that future research can address these issues, refining and expanding our understanding of the areas of hospital management in Portugal.

## 5. Contributions

This study aims to make substantial contributions to the field of hospital management in Portugal, highlighting specific areas that seek improvement and presenting reasoned recommendations. Key contributions include:

### 5.1 Identification of Priorities

By thoroughly analysing several areas, we provide a clear view of the priorities in hospital management in Portugal. This serves as

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a guide for managers, healthcare professionals and policymakers when directing efforts and resources to critical areas.

### 5.2 Incentive to Innovation

The emphasis on the importance of innovation highlights the need for creative approaches to the challenges faced by hospitals. This encourages the adoption of advanced technologies and innovative practices that can boost the efficiency and quality of healthcare services.

### 5.3 Subsidies for Policy Formulation

The insights provided in this study can serve as a basis for formulating effective policies in the healthcare sector in Portugal. By understanding areas for improvement, decision makers can implement targeted measures to drive positive change.

### 5.4 Approach to Financial Sustainability

The comparative analysis of management models highlights the relevance of efficient practices in the financial sustainability of hospitals. This provides support for implementing strategies that aim to balance finances while ensuring the continued provision of quality care.

### 5.5 Suggestions for Future Investigations

While acknowledging the limitations of the study, this work provides opportunities for future research. The complexity of the hospital environment suggests the ongoing need for more in-depth investigations into specific areas, providing a basis for the continued development of knowledge.

These contributions, when considered together, aim to promote tangible improvements in hospital administration in Portugal, culminating in more efficient, accessible and high-quality health services for the population.

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